

**MASWCD MINUTES
USDA Service Center
Jefferson City, Missouri
January 12, 2010**

Present

Steve Radcliff, President
Bruce Biermann, Area I
Tom Lambert, Area II
Kenny Lovelace, Area III
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV
George Engelbach, Area V
Ben Gorden, Area VI
Sharon Gifford, Area VII
Steve Huber, Area VIII
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Richard Hoelscher, Area V Alternate
David Hale, Area VI Alternate
Shelly Sumpter, Employees Association
Sandy Hutchison, Maries Co. SWCD
Dwayne Gelnar, NRCS State Conservationist
John Knudsen, Mo Dept. Conservation
Mike Wells, Dept. Natural Resources

Not Present

Fred Feldmann, Past President
David Dix, Treasurer

President Steve Radcliff welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Mike Wells met with the Board at the Board's request to discuss some of the issues they were concerned about. These issues included:

- Communication between DNR, MASWCD and the Districts
- Commission representation at Area Meetings and Training Conference
- SALT project funding
- Use of reserve funds
- Needs assessment allocations
- Inability to move funds within cost-share funding categories
- New election policy and rules
- How the new time accounting software will work – will it capture activities other than cost-share

Beverly Dometorch relayed a concern about District Conservationists not being aware of changes or issues referenced in DNR memos. Not all offices have a DC there every day, nor do all offices share the memos with NRCS.

She requested if the DC's could be added to the e-mail list when memos are sent out from the Program Office.

Mr. Wells also discussed the importance of the Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study and what it could mean for Missouri. He stated the main purpose is to try to eliminate navigation so river levels upstream could be maintained that would benefit recreation activities. Once the purpose of navigation is lost, the Corps would no longer be required to maintain river banks and levees which could have major impacts on Missouri's farm land. Following this discussion Mr. Wells left the meeting due to prior commitments.

Quorum established by roll call.

A motion was made by George Engelbach, Tom Lambert seconded, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The minutes from the September 8, 2009 meeting were approved as amended by adding the words "in the Gulf of Mexico" to the last line of the second paragraph on page 3. Motion for approval made by Tom Lambert, Bruce Biermann seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The minutes

from the November 30, 2009 meeting were approved as presented. Motion for approval made by Beverly Dometorch, Kenny Lovelace seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The minutes from the 2009 Annual Meeting were included for the Board to review. These will be approved at the 2010 Annual Meeting along with the minutes from the 2008 Annual Meeting.

A treasurer report provided by David Dix was presented for him. Sharon Gifford motioned to approve the treasurer report. Bruce Biermann seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). Treasurer reports for the MDC grant accounts (CRP-BOB and CREP) were also presented. Kenny Lovelace motioned to approve the MDC grant account reports. Tom Lambert seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

MDC Report: John Knudsen stated their new director Bob Ziehmer will begin his duties officially on next Monday. Aaron Jeffries has taken a position in the Director's office and Keith Jackson will now be taking Aaron's place with private lands work. He stated there have been a lot of changes going on at the Department, 11% of staff positions are being held vacant. Most of the staff reductions have been retirements. MDC cost-share averages a little over \$1 million per year, for this fiscal year it will be down to about \$500,000. John stated MDC hopes to be able to have cost-share programs in the future that will enhance the new practices on the SWCD cost-share docket. When asked how the MDC cost-share is distributed, John replied that it is distributed to their regions then to the Private Land Conservationists. The regions have resource areas they would like to address and an ideal amount of cost-share dollars they want to spend in each resource. John stated they have lost the engineering expertise for streambank projects, but they are looking at this issue. Streambank designs may need to be done privately until the issue is resolved. A joint effort on a system-based approach is being looked at.

NRCS Report: Dwaine Gelnar attended for J. R. Flores due to a prior commitment for J. R. Dwaine stated they are working on stimulus projects, mostly floodplain easements. January 29 is the closing date for all Farm Bill program sign-up except for special sign ups. Through the Mississippi River Basin Initiative \$80 million will be available to the Mississippi River Basin states for watershed projects. There are 3 watersheds contained almost entirely in Missouri that will receive funding along with 2 watershed in the bootheel area that are considered national in scope because major portions of the watershed is located in more than one state. Organic farming will have \$1.2 million available for projects. They must be certified organic farmers or working towards certification in order to receive any funding. Dwaine also mentioned the hoop tunnel funding that will be offered to organic and non-

organic farmers. He stated there are several restrictions on these hoop tunnels – cannot be heated, must be taken down and moved every year, and cannot exceed 2100 square feet. Dwaine also reported that J. R. Flores selected Drenda Williams as the Assistance State Conservationist of Operations. He stated that he felt the Training Conference went real well, they had received a lot of good feedback from NRCS employees that attended and felt pretty sure that NRCS will continue having NRCS employee meetings at the conference.

Commission Report: No one from the DNR Program Office was in attendance. The Commission Meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, several of the Board members indicated they plan to attend.

Employee Association Report: Shelly Sumpter stated she had received several telephone calls about the SALT funding change of not being able to request unclaimed cost-share funds from the previous year. She also stated she had several discussions about the issues with Shannon County and the audit being conducted. There is some feeling that the audit is the result of an earlier presentation at a Commission meeting. The next Employee Association meeting will be February 25 and there will be election of officers. They do have several new directors this year. Shelly stated that she felt the Partner Forum should continue at future conferences. When questioned about the decision for the audit for Shannon County, Shelly responded that one of the biggest issues seems to be why DNR is questioning the validity of practices when they all have been certified by NRCS.

Keith Hughes and Robert Wilson from LAGERS (Local Government Employees Retirement System) met with the board to discuss the possible legislation that would allow SWCD's to participate in LAGERS for their employees. They stated that currently they have approximately 3200 employees from 600 different employers covered in their retirement program. It is a defined benefit retirement program which means it is based on a formula and provides a monthly benefit for the rest of the employee's life. If this is pursued, it would be a choice for each Soil and Water District if they wanted to participate or not. If they did decide to participate, all their full-time employees would have to be covered. The main concern that LAGERS has about SWCD's becoming eligible to join is the issue of covering the liability in the event the sales tax is not renewed at some point. This was discussed in depth and a couple of options will be looked at. They stated as long as the liability was addressed in the wording of the legislation, they would be supportive of the legislation. They explained how the coverage works, there are various features of the plan that could differ depending on what each

SWCD decided to select, such as whether the employee contributed or not, if any of the prior service years were brought into the program and if so what percentage, and what formula level used for determining the benefits. The vesting period is 5 years, if an employee were to leave employment before they had been in the program for 5 years, they could get what they had paid into the retirement, but not what the employer had paid or any interest earnings. The first step if legislation is passed would be for a cost-study to be completed for a district which would determine the contribution levels depending on the various factors listed above. If prior service years are brought into the program, the cost for that is amortized over a 30-year period which is part of the concern over the liability if the sales tax does not get renewed at some point. After this discussion, a motion was made by Tom Lambert to not pursue this any further. The motion died due to no second. After further discussion of the pros and cons of going forward with this, George Engelbach made a motion to pursue the legislation, seconded by Bruce Biermann. Motion passed (7-1) as follows: Bruce Biermann—Yes, Tom Lambert—No, Kenny Lovelace—Yes, Beverly Dometrorch—Yes, George Engelbach—Yes, Ben Gorden—Yes, Sharon Gifford—Yes, Steve Huber—Yes.

Keith and Robert left the meeting and the Board returned to the regular agenda.

The Board discussed the 2009 Training Conference, reviewed a summary of the evaluations submitted, and reviewed the number of people registered and number of meals served. Overall attendance was higher than last year and meal guarantees were very close to the number of meals actually served. Everyone agreed the Partner Forum was a good thing and would like to have it continue at future conferences. The Board discussed the cost of the moderator for the Partner Forum. Rose Marie Hopkins had originally agreed to do this and had done all the information gathering and interviews with the Forum panelists before she was not able to continue through the conference. She did not submit any request for payment to cover her expenses of travel and time for the interviews, etc. A motion was made by Bruce Biermann, seconded by Beverly Dometrorch, to purchase a gift card in the amount of \$500 for her efforts. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). Peggy will take care of getting the gift card and delivering it to Rose Marie. A list was developed of other Thank-You's that need to be sent for the conference.

The Board discussed appointing a Secretary as per George's motion at the Business Meeting at Tan-Tar-A. The current organizing papers do not list an office of Secretary and if this is added in the bylaws all the organizing papers

will have to be re-filed with the State. After further discussion on this issue, George Engelbach made a motion to have the President appoint a recorder on an interim basis as needed. Tom Lambert seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The NACD National Meeting in Orlando is January 30 – February 3. The live auction item purchased for Missouri's donation is the Rhythm Clock. Last year the clock did not bring a very high price during the auction, partly due to the clock not physically being there for bidders to look at. A motion was made by Steve Huber, seconded by Beverly Dometrorch, to have those attending the NACD meeting bid on the clock and purchase if back if it is going to sell for less than what it cost to buy since we will be buying another one for the door prize at the next Training Conference anyway. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The Board discussed the dates for the 2010 Training Conference and the location. According to the evaluations, over 75% agreed on the October to December time frame. A motion was made by George Engelbach to have the same dates as this past conference (Monday-Wednesday following Thanksgiving) at Tan-Tar-A and work on a schedule to minimize overlap of major meetings. Tom Lambert seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The dates for the 2010 Education Seminar were discussed. After looking at dates available at the hotel and space available at the Capitol Rotunda, the dates of March 29 and 30 were decided on. The breakfast at the Capitol will be pretty much the same as last year. Copies of the 2011 DNR budget were included for the Board to review. The Soil and Water budget is approximately \$3 million less than last year due to decline in revenue; this will come from SALT, Cost-Share and Loan-Interest/Machine Grants.

AREA Reports: Beverly Dometrorch stated she had attended the open house for Benton County and her other issues had already been discussed with Mike Wells.

Steve Huber stated he had one district that had to push back the date of their annual meeting due to the new election policy and the requirement for the first advertisement 3 months prior to the election.

George Engelbach stated he thought he would have 100% of his districts paying state dues.

Other Business: The Shannon County audit was brought up again. It was stated that the auditing process needs to be consistent; this audit appears to have a different purpose and causes transparency concerns.

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, March 29, at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City, MO, with the Education Seminar starting that evening at 7:00 p.m. The next Soil & Water Commission Meeting will be March 10 in Jefferson City; however the legislature is not in session that week which required the dates for the Education Seminar be later in the month. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Steve Radcliff, President